WIKIPEDIA

James Ball (journalist)

James Ball is a British journalist and author. He has worked for _The Guardian_, Wikileaks, _BuzzFeed_, _The New European_ and _The Washington Post_ and is the author of three books. He is the recipient of several awards for journalism and was a member of _The Guardian_ team which won the Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism.[1]

Contents

Early life

Ball studied for a BA degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford and went on to enrol in the masters programme in journalism at City, University of London. After transferring to a diploma course for financial reasons,[2] he graduated from City in 2008 with a diploma in magazine journalism with a focus on investigative journalism.[3]

Career

After leaving university and whilst working for the Bureau of Investigative Journalism on iraqwarlogs.com,[1][4] Ball was approached in November 2010 by Julian Assange and invited to work as the in-house journalist for Wikileaks in the UK where he began working on the Iraq War documents leak. He described his days there as "long and erratic", complicated when a European Arrest Warrant was issued for Assange which lead to extradition proceedings known as the Assange v Swedish Prosecution Authority.[5] Ball later expressed criticism of Assange and

	James Ball
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Residence	London
Nationality	British
Alma mater	University of Oxford, City, University of London
Occupation	Journalist, author
Years active	2008 to present
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the Wikileaks organisation[6] and has stated that his journalistic duty of care was to the source, Chelsea Manning, rather than the organisation reporting on it.[7][8][5] Ball left Wikileaks after three months when he became increasingly concerned by the organisation's attempts to censor staff,[9] his own worries regarding protecting the identity of vulnerable individuals in the leaked cables and Assange's attempts to secure Wikileaks' funds for his own legal defence.[10] In 2012 he co-authored a book with Charlie Beckett documenting his experiences, *Wikileaks: News in the networked era*.[11]

In 2011 Ball joined British newspaper *The Guardian* where he worked on several high-profile investigative stories and was given several awards as part of *The Guardian* team.[1] Whilst working for *The Guardian*, Ball collaborated on the "Offshore Leaks" project which won multiple awards from Investigative Reporters and Editors as well as the George Polk Award in 2014.[12][13] In 2013 he was appointed data editor and from around June 2013 he worked on the Edward Snowden leaked documents on British and US intelligence organisations Government Communications Headquarters and National Security Agency. In October 2013 it was announced that Ball had joined Guardian US, the American online section of the newspaper where he took up the newly created position of special projects editor.[1]

Prior to working for *The Guardian*, Ball worked on British investigative current affairs programmes *Dispatches* for Channel 4 and *Panorama* for BBC Television. Whilst with the Bureau of Investigative Journalism he also worked for Al Jazeera and ITN.[14]

In September 2015 Ball joined the UK division of BuzzFeed as part of their investigative journalism team.[15] Since 2016 Ball has also wriiten articles for *The New European*, a British pro-European magazine.

Ball is a judge for the Amnesty International UK Media Awards having been a recipient in 2010 with the Bureau of Investigative Journalism.[16][17] Ball's work on the investigation into HSBC's money laundering was also shortlisted for The Orwell Prize for Journalism.[18]

Ball has been critical of the lack of fact checking by journalists and news consumers, of using clickbait headlines and the culture of media being forced to rely on advertising revenue from 'clicks' and social media 'shares' and has said, "While we are demanding that the audience trust mainstream outlets and put us on a higher pedestal, our business models favour getting the clicks – if you'd had stopped and waited to verify and check, you'd have missed out on the traffic all-together and got no revenue, so we actually reward running this unchecked footage."[19] He has also been highly critical of Donald Trump's method of disseminating truth and/or fiction[19] on platforms such as Twitter, describing his statements as "rhetorical clusterbombs of nonsense 'facts' [and] unprovable allegations."[20] He concludes we all need to take responsibility for 'fake news' and clickbait as well as the social networks we ultimately decide to click and share it on, perpetuating the problem of truth in journalism.[21]

James Ball, "Fact-checking in the Fake News Era" panel at QED2017

Awards in journalism

Ball has received several awards during his career for journalism and investigative journalism including,

- 2012 Laurence Stern fellowship winner at *The Washington Post* [1]

- 2013 XCity Alumni Award from City, University of London for his work in data journalism[3]
- 2014 Royal Statistical Society Award for Statistical Excellence in Journalism, in the print category for his work on 'The Thatcher effect', the legacy of Margaret Thatcher's public policy using historical data.[22]

Ball has been a member of investigative journalism teams which were awarded

- 2011 Amnesty International digital journalism award[1]
- 2013 Paul Foot Award special investigation prize for reporting on the files leaked by Edward Snowden[23]
- 2013 The Scripps Howard Foundation Roy W. Howard Award for Public Service Reporting for coverage of the National Security Agency data collection files.[24][25]
- 2014 The Pulitzer Prize for Public Service with the *Guardian US* for reporting on surveillance by the National Security Agency, and "helping through aggressive reporting to spark a debate about the relationship between the government and the public over issues of security and privacy."[26]
- 2016 *Press Gazette* British Journalism Awards, Investigation of the year Award for HSBC money laundering investigative reporting.[27]

Books

Wikileaks: News in the networked era, co-authored with Charlie Beckett, was published in 2012 by Polity Publishing and is a detailed record of the history of Julian Assange and Wikileaks, Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, and how this played out across journalistic media.

The Infographic History of the World, co-authored with Valentina D'Efilippo, was published 2013 by Collins. It is a representation of human history using infographics, or visual representations of data with text commentaries. *The Economist* praised its mostly "terrific charts" but stated some lacked "infographical discipline".[28]

Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World, published 2017 by Biteback Publishing,[29] discusses how truth has become devalued in the current socio-political climate, how the political left and right tend to exist in an "eco-system of bullshit: the combination of campaigns, media, technologies and more that come together to spread questionable information",[30] and examines whether this is a phenomenon post- Brexit and the Trump campaign. It has been described as "thorough and courageously even-handed" *(The Times)*[31] and expressing a "vivid analysis of how the business models and incentives currently prevailing in digital media render decent discourse all but inaudible" (Kazuo Ishiguro).[32]

See also

- James Bamford
- Julian Borger
- Nick Davies
- Barton Gellman
- Janine Gibson
- Glenn Greenwald
- Ewen MacAskill

- Alan Rusbridger

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External links

- James Ball at *The Guardian* (https://www.theguardian.com/profile/jamesball)